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DDP/RMO-68/131
5 December 1968

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Cable Secretariat

SUBJECT : CIA Cable Reference File

REFERENCES : A. Executive Director Memo dated
4 September 1968, Subject: Purge of
Inactive Records

B. Deputy Cable Secretariat Memo dated
25 November 1968, Subject: CIA Cable
Reference File

1. In both volume and substance, cables have been the principal medium of communication between this Directorate and its field installations. Excellent progress has been made in the reach and sophistication of the CS Records System and we have recently taken steps to ensure that more cables are taken into the System. Nevertheless, because of the emphasis of our System on operational matters, Agency requirements for compartmentation, the highly sensitive content of certain cables, past records procedures, and user responsibility for filing and final disposition, some cables of value are not available outside the Cable Secretariat. This means simply that the cable chronos maintained by the Cable Secretariat are the one most certain thing in an uncertain records world and thus serve an important and useful function as a backstop to the Clandestine Services Records System.

2. In reply to the questions contained in Reference B, I expect that our requirements for reference service will continue at about the same rate. It is noted that we still have requests for OSS cables and quite a few requests for more recent cables. This illustrates the fact that the Cable Secretariat chrono serves as a vital records backstop for the Clandestine Services. I, therefore, recommend that CIA cables, irrespective of the medium in which they are held, be retained for at least 60 years with agreement that there be a final review prior to destruction. I am told that the Cable Secretariat provides excellent service

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GROUP 1
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on cable requests whether from hard copy or microfilm which cannot be improved upon. However, recent improvements have been made in microfilm equipment, techniques for converting documents to film have been significantly advanced, and there is a requirement to retain cable chronos considerably beyond 15 years. These factors should make it economically feasible to film the entire cable collection and permit even more efficient service.



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DDP, Records Management Officer

cc: EA/DDP
C/OPSER